



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

5700 Berwyn Road
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740
Tel. (301) 474-5000
Fax (301) 474-5002

MAYOR
Stephen D. Isler
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)
Amanda M. Dewey
Ethan D. Sweep
Jeffrey Jay Osmond

Town Meeting Minutes June 12, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Isler, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Ethan Sweep and Jeffrey Jay Osmond. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Cpl. James Ignowski, Public Works Director Kenneth Hall, BHVFD Representative Matthew Huddle and citizens.

1. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Isler asked to move 2 proclamations to the top of the agenda. MPT Papanikolas moved and CM Sweep seconded to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 5 to 0.

2. Proclamations

CI-3 Gay Pride Month: Mayor Isler said the Council wishes to support and honor members of the LGBTQ community and proclaim June as gay pride month. He read the Proclamation marking the month of June as gay pride month.

CI-4 Juneteenth: Mayor Isler read a Proclamation declaring June 19 as 'Juneteenth' in Berwyn Heights, where June 19, 1865 was the date when African Americans in Texas first heard about the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863 declaring all slaves to be free people.

CM Dewey said she is excited to have the opportunity to recognize and celebrate events that are important to the community and thanked those who drafted the proclamations. CM Osmond said he supports the celebration of all national heritage events recognized by the federal government.

3. Public Hearings

ORD 175 B Amendment to FY 2019 Budget to Purchase Tippers and Toters: Mayor Isler opened the hearing at 7:06 p.m. and invited comments on the Ordinance. Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, asked what the dollar amount of the amendment is. Mayor Isler said the amendment appropriates \$53,180 dollars for the purchase of tippers and toters. The hearing was closed at 7:07 p.m.

ORD 175 C Amendment to FY 2019 Budget to Authorize the Purchase of a Mobile Speed Monitor and Handheld Speed Gun: Mayor Isler opened the hearing at 7:07 p.m. Mr. Attick said he thinks the speed monitor is a waste of money. The Police had a speed monitor before, but instead of discouraging speeding it encouraged drivers to test how fast they could go. The hearing was closed at 7:10 pm.

ORD 175 D Amendment to FY 2019 Budget to Encumber Funds for a Town Center Architectural Study: Mayor Isler opened the hearing at 7:10 p.m. Mr. Attick asked if the Town knows whether this

building will support a 2nd floor. TM Broadbent said this is what the study will seek to determine; as well as what the options are for expanding the building to accommodate the police station. A request for proposal is in the works.

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, commented he thinks the study is pointless because the building cannot be expanded until the Town has identified additional parking places. CM Dewey said parking will be one of the issues examined as part of the study. The hearing was closed at 7:14 p.m.

4. Approval of Minutes

CM Dewey moved and CM Sweep seconded to approve the May Town meeting minutes. The motion passed 5 to 0.

5. Mayor's Report

Mayor Isler said school will be out on June 14 and asked residents to watch out for children playing outside. Berwyn Heights students sent thank you notes to the Council for participating in career day and for supporting fun educational activities. Mayor Isler noted that this Council has completed its first year in office and thanked residents for their support while they were learning the job.

6. Department Reports

Administration: MPT Papanikolas said that the Department is running smoothly and deferred to TM Broadbent to report the details. TM Broadbent said the Department was focused on the budget, including evaluating the new budget process. She saluted Treasurer Rodriguez for working with her in learning and implementing a new budget process. The coming year, she plans to submit the Town's budget for an award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and will soon ask the Council to identify budget goals that will serve as performance measures for budget.

TM Broadbent said the Administration Department will hold a staff retreat on July 12 and Town offices will be closed. Funds from a wellness account will pay for the retreat as well as for new picnic tables to be set up next to the Town Center. Further, she is working on a comprehensive fee and fine schedule that combines in one place the different fee and fine schedules attached to or embedded in various Town ordinances to be reviewed at the next worksession. This should make it easier to set fees and fines during the budget process each year.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Rodriguez said she had a good pre-audit meeting with the Town's auditors. All staff is requested to complete purchases and turn in receipts before the end of the fiscal year. A wellness committee has been set up comprised of staff from each department to generate ideas on how to improve health and wellness of employees.

Code Compliance: CM Osmond reported that the Code Department has finished uploading data into the Comcate code management system and is now using it as it was intended to be. For the first time, business license notices were sent out with it. Further, he received several comments about properties with tall grass and other property maintenance issues, which he has turned over to staff to follow up.

TM Broadbent announced that Hollyce Goodwin, who currently works as a part-time code officer, has been selected as the next Code Compliance Director. She has a legal background and is one of the kindest people she has met. TM Broadbent is looking forward to working with her to rebuild the Code Department. Her first day in her new role will be July 8. Councilmembers concurred that Ms. Goodwin is a thorough professional and has the right attitude in dealing with often sensitive code matters.

Mr. Ventura commented that the removal of dead trees on private property has been discussed at recent meetings. It may be useful to inform residents what the regulations pertaining to dead trees are. TM Broadbent said Town code covers dead trees under hazardous conditions on exterior property [of the Clean Lot Ordinance] and details will be published in the next Bulletin, on the website and social media. However, if a dead tree does not threaten to fall in the public right of way or a neighbor's yard it is not considered hazardous to the public. In that case, the Town would not take any action.

TM Broadbent further stated that Pepco has agreed to remove some diseased cherry trees in the back of the Town Center and plant magnolias. Pepco will also replant some of the trees that they planted along Edmonston Road but have died.

Park, Recreation, Education & Civic Affairs: CM Dewey announced the upcoming Town-wide yard sale this Saturday that is coinciding with the Town cleanup and a jazz concert at Lake Artemesia on June 27. All civic organizations are requested to submit receipts for expenses as soon as possible so that the Treasurer can close out the books for FY 2019. On June 19, the Town of Fairmont is hosting a Pepco energy assistance day, where low income residents can get help with paying their electricity bills.

Public Works: Public Works Director Hall congratulated the Council on passing a successful budget and thanked them for approving equipment purchases that will make the job of his employees a little easier. He announced that the street sweeper will be in Town next week and requested residents park off the street so the sweeper can clean as much curbing as possible. On Friday he will take one of the trash trucks to Baltimore to have tippers installed. The vendor or he can train staff on using the tippers.

In response to questions, Director Hall said there has been improvement in keeping plastic bags out of the recycling stream but there are still many residents not in compliance. The Department continues to send out cards and place stickers on bins to tell residents that recyclables with plastic bags will not be picked up.

Public Safety: Cpl. Ignowski gave the police activities report as Chief Antolik was on vacation. There were 9 Part I offenses. The Police issued 166 traffic citations and 172 speed camera tickets, including 21 on Pontiac Street. On June 4, there was a break-in on Berwyn Road, which occurred in a brief period when the homeowner was not at home. There have also been a number of thefts from vehicles, most from unlocked vehicles. In two cases, the suspect located keys to a second vehicle in the unlocked vehicle, then used them to steal the second vehicle. Both stolen vehicles were recovered in south-east Washington, DC and a suspect arrested. Residents are urged not to leave their cars unlocked and/ or leave valuables in the car. In other news, Prince George's County police is requesting assistance with a homicide that occurred on May 22 in the 8700 block of Rhode Island Avenue, where a man was found with a gunshot wound to his head. Information about the case can be reported to Prince George's Police at 301-772-4925.

Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department: Matthew Huddle gave the report for the BHVFD. The rescue squad had 217 runs and the ambulance 258. The ladder truck had 44 runs because it has been out of service for repairs. The Fire Department has been unable to secure a backup truck from Prince George's County. Mr. Huddle advised to watch for kids as school is out for summer. During the hot months, everyone should make sure to stay hydrated and be alert to signs of heatstroke. TM Broadbent suggested the BHVFD help educate residents about the importance of wearing helmets when riding a bicycle, especially young children.

7. Committee Reports

Education Advisory Committee: CM Dewey announced the BHEAC will hold its next meeting on Monday, June 24 at 7 p.m. The Committee stepped up to engage with the School Board and PGCPs administrators to ensure that facility improvements at Berwyn Heights Elementary School (BHES) remained on track. The School Board has since voted to approve the facilities master plan amendments unchanged. BHES renovations will go forward as planned.

Green Team: CM Dewey said the Town cleanup is this Saturday at 10 am. Participants might check out yard sales going on at the same time. Students can earn community service hours.

Historical Committee: BHHC Secretary Debby Steele Snyder reported that the Historical Committee will participate in National Night Out on August 6 and have available new refrigerator magnets of a historic home. The Committee is also starting to plan its fall event and continues to work on oral histories. The museum will soon have a playback device where visitors can watch oral histories the Committee is collecting. An oral history highlights reel is already available on YouTube.

Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness: There was no report.

Recreation Council: Recreation Council President Susan Jones said approximately 30 residents have signed up to list their yard sales on a map for Saturday's Town-wide yard sale. The map will be available at the Town office and the Community Center. She thanked Public Information Aide Tiffany Minor for advertising the event. The first concert in a summer concert series will be on June 27 at Lake Artemesia featuring her own Susan Jones Jazz Quartet, followed by the Jan Knutson Trio on July 18 and concluding with the Berwyn Heights All Stars on August 29. The Ice Cream Social is tentatively scheduled for September 17, followed by Trunk or Treat in October and another concert in November. New ideas for events are always welcome.

Town Organizations Policy (moved up on agenda): CM Dewey asked to move up the discussion of the Town organizations policy that is up for adoption as Resolution 11-2019 tonight. MPT Papanikolas so moved. CM Sweep seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0. CM Dewey explained that the policy was initiated by the previous Council to formalize the relationship between the Town and the various committees and volunteer groups.

The policy to be adopted tonight seeks to clarify which organizations are covered by the Town's liability insurance and eligible for free use of Town facilities and the Bulletin. All Town organizations are classified as either committees or assemblies and both are eligible for free use of the Bulletin and Town facilities. However, assemblies are more independent and will not be covered by the Town's insurance. Nonetheless, assemblies must hold open meetings, abide by the Town's non-discrimination policy and provide an updated membership list to qualify for the above privileges. All organizations receiving Town funds will be subject to audits by the Town's auditor.

CM Dewey said Committees are established by the Council through a resolution or an ordinance to fulfill a specific public function and are covered by the Town's insurance. Committees receive funds through the Town's budget process and must regularly report on how they spend their money. Assemblies may apply for grants.

There ensued an extended discussion about the policy. Angela Wolfinger, Susan Jones, Debby Steele-Snyder, Mike Attick and Phil Ventura commented, making the following points:

- Organizations that don't participate regularly in Recreation Council meetings or Berwyn Heights Day activities should not be entitled to the same privileges.

- As an umbrella organization the Recreation Council relies on representatives from organizations attending its meetings to develop events programs and avoid scheduling conflicts.
- To date, groups have often contacted each other directly to work out scheduling conflicts.
- It is difficult to require volunteer members of Town organizations to attend additional meetings.
- The Recreation Council could reach out to residents who are not members of other organizations to supplement their membership.
- The Town could make receipt of grant funds dependent on participation in the Recreation Council.

The Council agreed that it is desirable to have more groups attend Recreation Council meetings, but some groups would likely cease to exist if they were required to attend to qualify for the use of facilities. Instead an effort should be made to better inform the leaders of each group about Recreation Council meetings and events. Linking the dispensation of Town funds to participation in the Recreation Council was thought to be a more viable approach than mandating participation via the policy.

Clerk Harper read Resolution 11-2019 Town Committees & Assemblies. CM Dewey asked for corrections to be made to the section setting forth requirements for assemblies. CM Sweep moved and MPT Papanikolas seconded to approve the Resolution, as amended. The motion passed 5 to 0.

8. Unfinished Business

ORD 175 B 2nd Reading & Adoption of FY 2019 Budget Amendments to Authorize Purchase of Toters and Tippers: Clerk Harper read the Ordinance. Mr. Ventura commented he hopes the Town will not only get 64-gallon size Toters but some smaller sizes as well. The tippers can lift all sizes of toters. With no further comments, CM Sweep moved to adopt Ordinance 175 B. CM Dewey seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0.

ORD 175 C 2nd Reading & Adoption of FY 2019 Budget Amendment to Authorize the Purchase of a Mobile Speed Monitor and Handheld Speed Gun: Clerk Harper read the Ordinance. CM Sweep moved and CM Dewey seconded to adopt Ordinance 175 C. The motion passed 5 to 0.

ORD 175 D 2nd Reading & Adoption of FY 2019 Budget Amendment to Encumber Funds for a Town Center Architectural Study: Clerk Harper read the Ordinance. CM Osmond said he would like to review the RFP before it is posted. MPT Papanikolas moved and CM Osmond seconded to adopt Ordinance 175 D. The motion passed 5 to 0.

9. New Business

Resolution 7-2019 Amending the Status of the Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Committee: Clerk Harper read the Resolution. CM Dewey asked to replace the word ‘organization’ with ‘committee’ in the section “Be it further Resolved’ to conform with the Town Organization Policy. CM Sweep moved and CM Dewey seconded to adopt Resolution 7-2019, as amended. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Resolution 12-2019 Creating Position of Treasurer/ Benefits Manager and Assistant to the Town Manager: Clerk Harper read the Resolution. TM Broadbent said the current position descriptions were approved by a previous Council and therefore it is appropriate for the Council to approve any changes. The Council already discussed and approved funding for the altered positions during the FY 2020 budget process. MPT Papanikolas moved to approve the Resolution. CM Sweep seconded. TM Broadbent thanked the Council for making it possible for a long-serving employee to be promoted and take on more challenging work. The Council approved the Resolution in a 5 to 0 vote.

10. Citizen Comments

Mike Attick asked what became of the attempt to ease congestion on the 8900 block of 60th Avenue during rush hours. There continue to be problems with vehicles being able to make the turn onto or off Greenbelt Road. TM Broadbent replied BHPD made 2 recommendations that were discussed at a public hearing in March. Any changes to parking regulations would affect the UMD bus routes and its Department of Transportation prefers not to make any changes during the regular semester. Angela Wolfinger suggested looking at removing a sidewalk on one side of 58th Avenue to allow more traffic to pass through on that street. MPT Papanikolas said residents on that block already feel there is too much speeding, which would get worse if the roadway was widened.

Phil Ventura commented on the electric vehicle charging stations. He said the stations use electricity around the clock and are not a good use of taxpayer money. Further, the type of stations installed behind the Town office are not energy star rated and are not on a list that distributors normally sell. Apparently, they are only used when installed for free. He would prefer a system that allows only authorized users to charge their vehicles rather than subsidizing any driver of electric vehicles. Mr. Ventura was provided with a Pepco bill showing no increase in the use of electricity since the charging stations were installed. He was assured the Town will keep monitoring the use and has the option to convert the station to charge users via credit cards.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk